

# COU260 Tele-therapy and Mental Health Care

**Level:** 2

**Credit Units:** 5 Credit Units

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Presentation Pattern:** EVERY SEMESTER

## Synopsis:

The delivery of counselling and mental health care in distance formats is more than a phase or passing trend. It is here to stay. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way the world navigates and accesses services. In Singapore, the safe distancing mandate and 'working from home' arrangements have limited practitioners' physical contact with clients. Social service agencies and private practitioners need to be quick to adapt, bring their services online to ensure service continuity. Telephone and e-counsellors must demonstrate specific set of skills and competencies for effective online service delivery.

COU260 Tele-therapy and Mental Health Care is for aspiring or in-sector practitioners who are currently practising in public domains or private settings. These include Counsellors, Therapists, Psychologists, Social Workers or professionals in other supporting roles. This 6-session course adopts a blended learning modality (mix of in-class and zoom sessions). It will be conducted over lecturing, class discussion, demonstrations and class experimentations. Assessments include written assignments and process recordings of the utilisation of an online platform or distance format of choice.

In this course, learners will learn to identify online platforms and technologies suitable for their clientele or service types. Learners will learn to transfer micro-skills and therapeutic techniques to online platforms. Other key learnings include ethical considerations, challenges and mitigation strategies surrounding service delivery in distance formats.

## Topics:

- Attitudes and readiness for distance practice – self-assessment: pre and post
- History and development of tele-therapy and tele-mental health
- Review of synchronous, asynchronous or blended platforms – benefits and limitations
- Relevant legislations, professional code of ethics and guidelines for practice
- Potential challenges surrounding use of distance formats and mitigation strategies
- Practical considerations of choice platforms or technologies for practice
- Individual therapy over telephone
- Individual therapy over videoconferencing
- Individual therapy over text messaging
- Individual therapy over emails
- Individual therapy over smartphone applications
- Tele-therapy for specialised areas of practice

## Textbooks:

Robertson, H.C. (2021): *Telemental Health and Distance Counselling: a counsellor's guide to decisions, resources and practice*. 1st Edition New York: Springer Publishing.  
ISBN-13: 978-082617994

Reger, G.M. (2021): Technology and Mental Health: a clinician's guide to improving outcomes. 1st Edition New York and London: Routledge.  
ISBN-13: 978-113835394

### Learning Outcome:

- Explain the choice of modalities and platforms in which tele-therapy and mental health care may be delivered that is appropriate for client profile or service.
- Discuss relevant ethical considerations, legal compliance, documentation and security issues.
- Identify potential challenges and strategies concerning client verification, communication barriers, perceived impersonality, set up or technical problems.
- Apply intake, needs assessment, case conceptualisation, treatment tracking and risk assessment over distance formats.
- Demonstrate micro-skills or interventions over distance formats.
- Use the unique advantages and strengths of different platforms for clinical effectiveness.

### Assessment Strategies (Evening Class):

Components	Description	Weightage Allocation (%)
Overall Continuous Assessment	TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 1	20
	TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 2	30
Overall Examinable Components	ECA	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>